

# University of Exeter

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A primary initial teacher training  
inspection report  
2007/08

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## Introduction

The University of Exeter works in partnership with 130 schools to provide primary initial teacher training courses. It offers a one year postgraduate certificate in education course with qualified teacher status in the 3-7 and 5-11 age ranges. At the time of the inspection there were 141 trainees.

## Context

The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors in accordance with the *Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011)*.

This revised report combines the judgements from a short inspection of the provision and of the management and quality assurance arrangements in 2006/07, with the judgements from the scrutiny of further evidence submitted to Ofsted in February 2008.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Main inspection judgements

Quality of training: Grade 1

Management and quality assurance: Grade 1

## Key strengths

- very good cohesion between all aspects of the training and particularly the links between theory and practice
- the highly effective management systems, which ensure very good training
- the high calibre of tutors and school-based trainers, who provide inspirational training
- the outstanding support for individual needs throughout the course, from the point that trainees are selected
- the excellent contribution made by partnership schools to the quality of the training.

## Points for consideration

- ensuring that success criteria in improvement plans are more measurable.

## The quality of training

1. The previous good quality of training has been improved and is now outstanding. A number of well thought out changes to the programme have contributed to this; for example, the coherent links between the core subjects and the professional studies courses to include aspects of the *Every Child Matters* agenda. As a result, trainees meet the Standards and are very well prepared to teach pupils across the key stages for which they are being trained. A key factor influencing the success of the training programme is the team of tutors whose knowledge, enthusiasm, commitment and conscientiousness inspire the trainees. This is reflected in the high quality presentation of the trainees' work, the detailed evidence of their progress, and the good reports from schools of the trainees' positive attitudes and their application to teaching.
2. The programme meets the Requirements. It is carefully and effectively structured to ensure that trainees relate theory and practice through close links in the content of the modules in professional studies, subject studies and school experience. The programme is highly cohesive, focused yet flexible, and with many impressive aspects. For example, in mathematics and science there are well organised links with information and communication technology (ICT), inclusion and diversity. Strong links are also made between all elements of the programme and the National Curriculum, the Primary National Strategy and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. The trainees are very well supported through detailed and precise course outlines. Expectations and timetables in the handbooks are very clear. Directed tasks and assignments are rooted in classroom practice so that a clear link between the taught sessions and practical teaching is established. For example, in English, very good use is made of speaking, listening, storytelling, drama and real life contexts. Course outlines are clear; lecture handouts and course readers are of very good quality
3. Training takes account of individual needs in an outstanding way. The systems to identify and support trainees in developing and strengthening their subject knowledge are excellent. For example, in all subjects, trainees with particular subject expertise act as peer tutors to other trainees.
4. Trainees' progress is monitored and assessed very well. Assignments and tasks are well designed to provide secure evidence of progress in subject knowledge and pedagogical understanding, and in linking several subjects together. There are very good systems to record the extent of subject teaching on school experiences.
5. The individual development profile is a useful document and helps trainees to demonstrate their progress during the course and their achievement against the Standards. Assignments are well marked against assignment-specific criteria and within the generic grading criteria. An appropriate sample of assignments is second marked. Directed tasks are not marked formally but their completion is monitored closely and they are appropriately annotated. The tasks are carefully conceived and provide important evidence for assignments. The trainees' teaching is observed by

school and university staff, and lesson observation forms are completed in detail. The final assessment process is rigorous.

## Management and quality assurance

6. The management and quality assurance of subjects and the training programme as a whole are very good with some outstanding characteristics. A number of well planned improvements have been made since the last inspection.

7. Recruitment and selection procedures are very good. The selection process, which has the active involvement of partnership schools, is rigorous, fair and effective in filtering out unsuitable applicants at an early stage. The process is kept under close review through a system of monthly reports which ensures that issues are identified and resolved promptly. Very good guidance is provided to prospective candidates and the selection activities accurately identify high calibre trainees. Once selected, the trainees receive very good guidance and individual support so that they are prepared fully for the course. This complements the highly effective strategies which support individual needs throughout the training. The university, which has a strong commitment to inclusion, has been very successful in attracting under-represented groups, such as men, onto the training courses. Considerable effort has been made to recruit and support trainees from minority ethnic communities, for example through the appointment of a black and ethnic minority recruitment and retention co-ordinator, and numbers have risen slightly. Retention rates are high.

8. Management systems and structures are very well organised to ensure that all partners provide cohesive training. A strong feature is the involvement of partnership schools in the training; teachers regularly make valuable contributions to centre-based training. Partnership arrangements are very well managed and organised. For example, well run cluster meetings provide opportunities to share good practice and ensure very good communications across the partnership.

9. Central and school-based trainers are very well trained. Partnership documentation defines clearly the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the training. Tutors are well qualified, and bring a very wide range of experience and expertise; they also have relevant research interests. In partnership schools, class tutors, mentors and initial teacher training co-ordinators receive very well designed training which is specific to their roles. Consequently, trainees are exceptionally well supported on their placements.

10. The training is well resourced. The university has designated teaching spaces where tutors model good learning environments. Schools receive appropriate funding to support trainees' placements and training for school-based staff.

11. Very good quality assurance systems support the management and development of high quality training. Race equality and equal opportunities policies are monitored closely. Very good support is provided to trainees. For example,

those with disabilities are given useful guidance on applying for teaching posts. University tutors monitor closely the quality and consistency of school-based training. Trainees' progress during school placements is kept under close and accurate scrutiny. Evaluations from trainees and trainers contribute to very useful reports following each placement, which include clear action plans to address any issues raised. Centre-based training is monitored closely by managers. There are robust external examination procedures; the reports provide a detailed and helpful commentary on the quality of the training.

12. Improvement plans at subject and programme levels identify accurately key issues. Longer term plans to ensure the strategic and cohesive development of the training are well designed. Improvement plans are detailed and provide a clear indication of how the university intends to maintain and develop good training outcomes in the future. However, the success criteria are not always easily measurable.